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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2521  
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2423  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 1028  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 1025  
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0091  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3150

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KOLKATA 000336

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INSB (TITUS)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: JHARKHAND STATE ELECTIONS: NO OUTRIGHT WINNER, CONGRESS' UPA  
LARGEST CAUCUS

REF: KOLKATA 328

1. (SBU) Summary: On December 23 the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand announced the results for its recent state assembly elections. No single party or pre-poll alliance won an outright majority, although the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) is the largest caucus. A majority of voters ignored the Maoist/Naxal call for an election boycott and central and state police ensured that the elections went off without any major disruption. Over the next few weeks, Congress and its regional party ally, Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) will have to negotiate with other parties, including the unexpected star performer, the regional party Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), to form a government with majority support in the state assembly. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) continued the losing streak that began early this year in the national parliamentary elections. While the elections may allow Jharkhand to form a government after more than one year without an elected one, the fractured polity and lack of any clear winner indicate that political instability and all of its associated problems (weak administration, poor security and corruption) will continue to plague the state.

2. (U) Results from the 2009 Jharkhand state assembly elections are listed below. In order to form a government a party or coalition needs the support of at least 41 of the 81 members.

United Progressive Alliance

Congress - 14

Jharkhand Vikas Morcha - 11

National Democratic Alliance

Bharatiya Janata Party - 18

Janata Dal United - 2

Unaffiliated

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha - 18

Rashtriya Janata Dal - 5

13. (U) Voter turnout (58 percent) was higher than in the April/May national parliamentary elections (55 percent) as voters ignored the Maoist/Naxal call for an election boycott. Maoists killed 12 police in isolated attacks during the five-phase election, but a large presence of state and central police ensured that the elections took place without any major incidents or disruptions.

Comment: Shibu Soren's JMM Likely to Emerge as Kingmaker

14. (SBU) While Congress and its ally, the Jharkhand-based regional party JVM, may be the largest political grouping in the new state assembly, the "winner" is Shibu Soren and his JMM. Ditched by Congress before the national parliamentary elections in April/May, his strong performance in the state assembly elections makes him indispensable to any coalition formation in the state. However, the personal rivalry between JMM's tribal leader Shibu Soren and JVM's tribal leader Babulal Marandi, both of whom are former and aspiring future Chief Ministers, makes squaring Jharkhand's "political" circle very difficult. The clear "loser" of this election was the BJP, whose state assembly seat total dropped from 30 to 18. Only seven months ago the BJP had won a majority of Jharkhand's parliamentary seats (eight of 14). This is yet another setback for the national party that cannot seem to break its rudderless descent. While the elections may allow Jharkhand to form a government after more

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than one year without an elected one, the fractured polity and lack of any outright winner indicate that political instability and all of its associated problems (weak administration, poor security and corruption) will continue to plague the state.  
PAYNE